

AIR PRIORITY

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

No. 1195

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From: Ambassador BAGHDAD  
 To: Department of State, Washington  
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 6-24 NAVY-8

Subject: Prospects for Settlement of Iraq-Iran Boundary Problems

Embassy officers discussed separately with Mr. Yousif GAILANI, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Amin MUMAIYIZ, Director General of Political Affairs, the status of efforts to bring about the final demarcation of the boundary between Iraq and Iran.

The problem of exact determination of this boundary has been, as the Department is aware, under consideration for a good many years. Prior to World War II the boundary from Basra to a point on the border of Amara Liwa had been pretty well agreed upon and boundary markers installed. Recently the two countries have concurred in the appointment of a joint border commission. It was agreed ultimately also that a neutral arbitrator should be appointed to this commission. His decisions on points of difference between the Iraqi and Iranian members of the commission are to be accepted as final by both countries. The commission, or parts of it, will actually go into the field and agree on the physical location of the boundary markers.

The Iraqi officials confirm that the Swedish government's nominee for the position of the neutral arbitrator has now been accepted by both countries. It is expected that he will arrive shortly in Tehran where procedures for organization of the commission will be worked out with Iraqi and Iranian representatives. Meanwhile, Iraq is in the process of choosing its members for the commission. Included will be representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defense, Interior and an Iraqi topographical expert. Gailani was unable to indicate at this time whom his Government would appoint to the commission.

Asked about possible complications resulting from the back up of water behind the Derbendi Khan Dam now under construction in Suleimaniyah Liwa, Mumaiyiz stated that the Derbendi Khan lake was not expected to extend into Iranian territory but that its creation might tend to raise the water level

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in tributary streams as they flow through certain areas of Iran. The boundary commissioners are expected to look into this problem. The Government of Iraq has informed Iran that Iraq is prepared to consider paying compensation for any damages suffered by land owners in Iran.

Without going into detail Gailani indicated that there is a relation between the establishment of the boundary commission and a commission to regulate operations of the Shatt al-Arab as an international waterway. The management commission for the Shatt al-Arab will, however, be separately established with different personnel. Personnel of this commission has not yet been agreed upon. Munsifiy declared Iraq's position is that Iranian members should have advisory or consultative status only and that full executive authority would rest with the Iraqi members. The Iranians, however, desire that their commissioners should have the right to share in decisions.

According to the Iraqi officials there are pending no significant disagreements concerning the division of the two countries' sovereignty in the waters of the Shatt al-Arab.

COMMENT:

At present prospects appear more favorable than they have for some time for arriving at a final determination of this long-pending border problem.

For the Ambassador:

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